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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2337

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

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RHHMUNB/JIATF WEST

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000099

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ISN, SCT, EAP/MTS, RSP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL MCAP MARR MY

SUBJECT: MALAYSIAN COAST GUARD RECEIVES ITS FIRST U.S.
COAST GUARD CUTTER VISIT

REF: 2008 KL 1003

¶11. (U) For the first time in its nearly four-year history, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) hosted the port visit of a U.S. Coast Guard vessel. The 378-foot High Endurance Cutter Boutwell arrived in the East Malaysia port of Kota Kinabalu on February 4, 2009. The crew of 178 USCG personnel spent three days training with their Malaysian counterparts. For the members of the newly created MMEA, it was instructive to tour the US ship and to compare similarities and differences with counterparts from the 218 year-old USCG. Training focused on maritime law enforcement, boarding procedures, and small boat operations and culminated in a discussion of interagency coordination in mission strategy, planning and operations. In addition, some thirty personnel from both coast guards worked together to help restore a wetlands conservation park in the City of Kota Kinabalu. This community relations project and the visit received widespread positive coverage by several Malaysian newspapers. The visit was jointly coordinated by USCG, Pacific Fleet, MMEA, NCIS, and Post.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: Coming on the heels of the October 2008 meeting of the heads of the U.S. and Malaysian coast guards at USCG Headquarters in Washington and the successful completion in November of the first Title 1207 funded USCG-led training course in East Malaysia, the visit of the Boutwell is another important milestone of the quickly deepening bilateral relationship between MMEA and USCG (reftel). What the MMEA lacked in experience receiving this type of working visit - the MMEA normally provides security for Navy vessels during port calls - it made up for in the eagerness of its officers to ensure the success of the visit and the enthusiasm of its personnel participating in the training exercises and discussions. End Comment.

KEITH